

CLAIMS

1. In a computer network formed of a communication channel and a plurality of digital processors coupled to the communication channel for communication thereon, computer apparatus comprising:
  - a data assembly for providing agate information to users of the computer network, in response to a user request the data assembly transmitting desired agate information across the communication channel to one of the digital processors for display of the desired information and viewing by the user; and
  - a tracking and profiling member responsive to the data assembly, in response to a user viewing agate information obtained through the data assembly, the tracking and profiling member recording indications of user viewing activity with respect to the agate information and therefrom providing a psychographic profile of the user.
2. Apparatus as claimed in Claim 1 wherein the data assembly provides at least one of stock and market data, theater and television schedules, sports statistics, weather information, travel information and Directory information.
3. Apparatus as claimed in Claim 1 wherein:
  - the tracking and profiling member records format preferences of users with respect to presentation of certain agate information, the format preferences including color schemes, text size and shapes;
  - in response, the data assembly displays agate information to a user in a manner

customized according to the format preferences of the user.

4. Apparatus as claimed in Claim 3, wherein the tracking and profiling member further records demographic information of the user such that demographic profiles of users are provided with respect to presentation and category of agate information.
5. Apparatus as claimed in Claim 1 further comprising an advertising component coupled between the data assembly and tracking and profiling member, the advertising component holding a plurality of advertisements to be displayed to users on the network, in accordance with the psychographic profile of the user.
6. Apparatus as claimed in Claim 5 wherein the tracking and profiling member further provides demographic information about a user; and the data assembly transmits advertisements for display with agate information to users based on psychographic profile and a demographic profile of the user to provide targeted marketing.
7. Apparatus as claimed in Claim 5 wherein the advertising component further records history of users viewing the advertisements, including for each advertisement, at least one of (i) number of times viewed by a user, (ii) number of times selected for further information, and (iii) number of times a purchase was obtained through the advertisement.
8. Apparatus as claimed in Claim 7 further comprising a subroutine coupled to the advertising component for

performing a regression analysis on the history of users viewing the advertisements, and therefrom refining profile of desired users to whom to display advertisements.

9. In a computer network formed of a communication channel and a plurality of digital processors coupled to the communication channel for communication thereon, a method for forming user profiles comprising the steps of:
  - providing agate information for viewing by users of the network;
  - for each user, recording history of user activity with respect to agate information;
  - from the recorded history, forming user profiles of the users, each user profile providing an indication of categories of interest to the user and display preferences for each category.
10. A method as claimed in Claim 9 wherein the step of providing agate information includes providing at least one of stock data, media schedules, sports news, weather information, travel information, and directory information.
11. A method as claimed in Claim 9 wherein the step of providing agate information includes displaying advertisements to users; and
  - the step of recording further records user viewing activity with respect to displayed advertisements.
12. A method as claimed in Claim 11 further comprising the step of continually refining user profiles to whom

agate and advertisements are displayed by performing regression analysis of recorded user viewing activity.

13. In a computer network formed of a communication channel and a plurality of computers coupled to the communication channel for communication thereon, a method for defining profile of target users comprising the steps of:
  - (a) providing a source of information, the source holding a multiplicity of pieces of information;
  - (b) for each of certain pieces of information in the source, setting respective initial profile of target users to receive the certain piece of information;
  - (c) transmitting each of the certain pieces of information across the communication channel such that each is displayed only to users having a profile substantially matching the respective initial profile of the certain piece of information;
  - (d) recording computer activity of users viewing the certain pieces of information;
  - (e) redefining the initial profiles of target users based on a regression analysis of the recorded computer activity of users, said redefining forming respective adjusted profiles of target users for each of said certain pieces of information; and
  - (f) continually repeating steps c-e with the adjusted profiles of the certain pieces of information, such that the certain pieces of information over time, become better targeted to users having an interest in said information and hence said method is self-tailoring.

14. A method as claimed in Claim 13 wherein the step of providing a source of information includes providing agate information.
15. A method as claimed in Claim 13 wherein the step of providing a source of information further includes providing advertisements as the certain pieces of information.
16. A method as claimed in Claim 15 wherein the step of setting respective initial profiles of target users includes allowing sponsors of the advertisements to indicate relative importance of demographic and psychographic criteria of target users.
17. A method as claimed in Claim 16 wherein the step of redefining the profiles of target users includes using the regression analysis to weight importance of the demographic and psychographic criteria of target users.
18. A method as claimed in Claim 13 wherein the step of recording provides psychographic profiles of users; and  
the step of redefining is further based on a regression analysis of the psychographic profiles of users as recorded in the recording step.
19. Method as claimed in Claim 14 wherein the step of transmitting includes displaying to users agate information in real time of events generating the agate information.

20. Method as claimed in Claim 19 wherein the step of transmitting and displaying includes displaying agate information in predefined schedules to coordinate with at least one of television and radio broadcast of events generating the agate information.
21. Method as claimed in Claim 19 further comprising the step of displaying agate information, including updating of the information, in real-time of the events generating the agate information, in a manner such that the agate information is viewable alongside television viewing of said events.

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